For Mayme, Read Mary

A Story of Our Square

By Samuel Hopkins Adams

OF all the local gossip wherewith I beguiled Leon Coventry the night when I fought for his soul against creeping madness, the tale that best held him was the episode of Mayme McCartney and the Weeping Scion of Wealth and Position. Indeed, he expressed interest to the point of wishing to recover promptly so that he might go out and drown the Scion in the fountain at the center of our square. It is just as well that he did not. Even at that early day Mayme would not easily have forgiven him.

At the time when she first asserted herself as an element to be locally reckoned with Mayme McCartney was a bad little good girl. She inspired (I trust) esteem for her goodness. But it was for her hardy and happy impudence, her bent for ingenious mischief, her broad and catholic disrespect for law, conventions, proprieties and persons and the glint of the devil in her black eyes that we really loved her. Such is the perversity of human nature in our square. I am told that it is much the same elsewhere.

She first came into public notice by giving (unsolicited) a most scandalous and inspiring imitation of old Mme. Tallaffer, aforetime of the southern aristocracy, in the act of rebuking her landlord, the insecticidal Boggs ("Boggs Kills Bugs" in his patent of nobility), for eating peanuts on his front steps. She then (earnestly solicited by a growing audience) put on impromptu sketches of the little red doctor diagnosing internal complications in a doodlebug; of MacLachan (drunk) singing "The Cork Leg" and MacLachan (sober) repenting thereof; of Bartholomew Storrs offering samples of his mortuary poesy to a bereaved second cousin; and, being decked out in cotton-batting whiskers (limb of Satan!), of myself proffering sage counsel and pious admonitions to our square at large. Having concluded, she sat down on a bench and coughed.

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AND the Little Red Doctor, who, from the shelter of a shrub, had observed with artistic appreciation rather than with delight the presentation of his little idiosyncrasies, drew nearer and looked at her hard. For he disliked the sound of that cough. He suspected that his old friend and opponent, Death, with whom he fought an interminable campaign, was mocking him from ambush. It wasn't quite fair play, either, for the foe to use the particular weapon indicated by the cough on a mere child. With her lustrous hair loose and floating, and her small, eager, flushed face, she looked far short of the mature and self-reliant seventeen which was the tally of her experienced years.

"Hello," greeted the Little Red Doctor, speaking with the brusque informality of one assured of his place as a local celebrity. "I don't know you, do I?"

Mayme lifted her eyes. "If you don't," she drawled, "it ain't for lack of tryin'. Is your hat glued on?"

"Good Lord!" exclaimed the Little Red Doctor, indignantly. "Do you think I'm trying to flirt with you? Why, you're a mere girl!"

"Get up to date," advised Mayme. "I'm old enough to be your steady. Only I'm too lucky."

"That's a bad cough you've got," said the Little Red Doctor hastily.

"I've got a better one at home. Like to hear it some day?"

"Bring it over to my office and let's look at the thing," suggested the Little Red Doctor, smiling.

As Mayme McCartney observed that smile, with the shrewd judgment of men which comes early, in self-protection, to girls of her environment, the suspicion and impudence died out of her face, which became friendly and wistful. "D'you think it means anything?" she asked.

"Any cough means something. I couldn't tell without examination."

"How much?" inquired the cautious Mayme.

The Little Red Doctor is a willing liar in a good cause. "No charge for first office consultation. Come over to my office."

When the test was finished the Little Red Doctor looked professionally noncommittal. "Live with your parents?" he asked.

"No. With my aunt. Round in the avenue."

"Where do you work?"

"The Emporium," answered the girl, naming the great and still fashionable downtown department store half a mile to the westward.

"You ought to quit. As soon as possible."

"And spoil my delicate digestion?"

"Who said anything about your digestion?"

"I did. If I quit workin' I quit eatin'. And that's bad for me. I tried it once."

"I see," said the Little Red Doctor, recognizing a condition by no means unprecedented in local practice. "Couldn't you get a job in some better climate?"

"Where, for instance?"

"Well, if you knew any one in California."

"How's the walkin'?" asked Mayme.

"It's long," replied the Little Red Doctor, "seeing" again. "Anyway, you've got to have fresh air."

"They serve it fresh every morning, right here in our square," Mayme pointed out.

"Good idea. Get up early and fill your lungs full of it for an hour every day." He gave some further instructions.

Mayme produced a dollar and delicately placed it on the mantel.

"Take it away," said the Little Red Doctor. "Didn't I tell you——"

"Go-wan!" said Mayme. "Whadda you think you are? Bellevue Hospital? I pay as I go, doc."

The Little Red Doctor frowned austerely.

"What's the matter? Face hurt you?" asked the solicitous Mayme.

"People don't call me doc," began the offended practitioner in dignified tones.

"Oh, that's because they ain't on to you," she assured him. "I wouldn't call you 'doc' myself if I didn't know you was a good sport back of your bluff."

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The Little Red Doctor grinned, looking first at Mayme and then at the dollar. "You aren't such a bad sport yourself," he admitted. "Well, we'll call this a deal; office practice. But if I see you in the square and give you a tip about yourself now and again, that doesn't count. That's on the side. Understand?"

She considered it gravely. "All right," she agreed at length. "Between pals, yes? Shake, doc."

So began the quaint friendship between our hard-worked, bluff, knightly hearted practitioner and the impish and lovable little store girl. Also another of the innumerable tilts between him and his old friend, Death.

"He's got the jump on me, Dominie," complained the Little Red Doctor to me. "But, at that, we're going to give him a fight. She's clear grit, that youngster is. She's got a philosophy of life, too. I don't know where she got it, or just what it is, but it's there. Oh, she's worth saving, Dominie."

"If I hadn't reason to think you safeguarded, my young friend," said I, "I'd give you solemn warning."

"Why, she's an infant!" returned the Little Red Doctor scornfully. "A poor, little, monkey-faced child. Besides——" He stopped and sighed.

"Yes, I know," I assented. There was a Besides in the Little Red Doctor's sorrowful heart which bulked too large to admit of any jealousy. "Nevertheless," I added, "you needn't be so scornful about the simian type in woman. I've seen trouble caused in this world by kitten faces, by pure classic faces, by ox-eyed Juno faces, by vivid blond faces, by dreamy poetic faces, by passionate southern faces, but for real power of catastrophe, for earthquake and eclipse, for red ruin and the breaking up of laws, commend me to the humanized, feminized monkey face. I'll wager that when Antony first set eyes on Cleopatra he said: 'And which coco palm did she come down from?' Phryne was of the beautified baboon cast of features, and as for Helen of Troy, the best authorities now lean to the belief that the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium was a reversion to the aboreal. I tell you, man that is born of woman cannot resist it. Give little Mayme three more years——"

"I wish to heaven I could," said the Little Red Doctor.

"Can't you?" I asked, startled. "Is it as bad as that?"

"It isn't much better. How's your insomnia, Dominie?"

"Insomnia," said I, "is a scientific quibble for unlaid memories. I take mine out for the early morning air at times, if that's what you mean."

"It is. Keep an eye on the kid, and do what you can to prevent that busy little mind of hers from brooding."

In that way Mayme McCartney and I became early morning friends. She adopted for her special own a bench some rods from mine, under the lilac near the fountain. After her walk, taken with her thin shoulders flung back and the chest filling with deep, slow breaths, she would pay me a call or await one from me, and we would exchange theories and opinions and argue about this and other worlds. Seventy against seventeen. Fair exchange, for if mine were the riper creed, hers was the more vivid and adventurous. Who shall say which was the sounder?

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ON the morning of the astonishing Trespass I was late, being discouraged by a light rain. As she approached her bench she found it occupied by an individual who appeared to be playing a contributory part in the general lamentation of nature. The interloper was young, and quite exquisite of raiment, which alone would have marked him for an outlander. His elbows were propped on his knees; his fists supported his cheek bones; his whole figure was in a slump of misery.

Scrutinising him with surprise, Mayme was shocked. At the same time she heard an unmistakable and melancholic sound.

The benches in our square have seen more life than most. They have cradled weariness of body and spirit; they have assuaged grief and given refuge to shaking terror and been visited by Death. They have shivered to the passion of cursing men and weeping women. But never before had any of their ilk heard grown young manhood blubber. Neither had Mayme McCartney. It inspired her with mingled emotions, the most immediate of which was a desire to laugh.

Accordingly she laughed. The intruder lifted a woeful face, gave her one vague look, and reverted to his former posture. Mayme stopped laughing. She advanced and put a friendly hand on one of the humped shoulders. "Cheer up, buddy," she said. "It ain't as bad as you think it is."

"It's worse," gulped a choky voice. Then the head reared again. "Who are you?" it demanded.

"I'm your big sister," said Mayme reassuringly. "Tell a feller about it."

The response was neither polite nor explanatory. "D—n sisters!"

"Oh, tutt-tutt and naughty-naughty," rebuked Mayme. "Somebody's sister been puttin' somethin' over on poor little Willie?"

"My own sister has." He was in that state of semi-hysterical exhaustion in which revelation of one's intimate troubles to the first comer seems natural. "She's gone and got arrested," he wailed.

Mayme's face became grave and practical. "That's different," said she. "What's her lay?"

"Lay? I don't know——"

"What's her line? What's she done to get pinched?"

"Shoplifting. At the special night sale of the Emporium."

"You're tellin' me! In the silks, huh?"

"What do you know about it? My Lord! Is it in the papers already?"

"Keep your hair on, buddy. I work there, and I heard about that pinch. Swell young married lady. Why, that'll be all right, you poor boob," returned the kindly Mayme. "The judge will let her off with a warning."

"How do you know?"

"They always do. Those cases are common. Dolan ought be canned for makin' a pinch of a lady."

"What if they do let her off?" lamented the youth. "It'll be in all the papers, and I'll be ruined. My life's spoiled. I might as well leave the city."

"Ah, don't do a mean trick like that to the old town!" besought the sardonic Mayme. "Where do you come in to get hurt?"

He burst into the hectic grievances of the pampered and spoiled child. His family was just getting a foothold in society (with an almost holy emphasis on the word), and now they were disgraced. In his petulant grief he did an amazing thing; he produced a bunch of clippings from the local society columns setting forth, in the printed company of the Shining Ones, the doings (mostly charitable) of Mrs. Samuel Berthelin, her daughter, Mrs. Harris, and her son David, referred to glowingly as "the scion of the wealth and position of the late lamented financier."

Capacity for awe was not in Mayme's independent soul. But she was interested and sympathetic. Here was a career worth saving.

"Let's go over to the station house," said she. "I know some of the cops."

To the white building with the green lanterns they went. The shoplifting case, it appeared, had already been bailed out. Furthermore, everything would be all right, and there was little fear of publicity; the store itself would see to that. Vastly relieved and refreshed in spirit, David Berthelin began to take stock of his companion with growing interest. She was decidedly not pretty. Just as decidedly she was quaint and piquant and quite new to his jejune but also somewhat bored experience. From the opening passage of their first conversation he deduced, lacking the insight to discriminate between honest frankness and immodesty, that she was a "fly kid." On that theory he invited her to breakfast with him. David was not a very nice boy. But he was very young and had never had much of a chance. Mayme accepted. They went to Thorsen's Elite Restaurant, on the corner, where David roused mingled awe and misgivings in the breast of Polyglot Elsa, the cashier, by ordering champagne, and Mayme reassured her by declining it.

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THEN began an acquaintanceship which swiftly ripened into a queer sort of intimacy, more than a little disturbing to us of Our Square who were interested in Mayme. Young Berthelin's overornate roadster appeared in our quiet precincts more often than appeared to us suitable or safe, and black-eyed Mayme, looking demure and a little exalted, was whirled away to unknown worlds, always returning, however, at respectable hours.

She ceased to be the raggle-taggle, hoydenishly clad Mayme of the cash department, and, having been promoted to saleswoman, quite went in for dress. On this point she sought the advice of the Bonnie Lassie. The result went far to justify my prophecy that Mayme's queer little face might yet make its share of trouble in an impressionable world.

If Little Mayme were headed for trouble, she went to meet it with a smiling face. To me was deputed the unwelcome task of conveying the solemn and, as it were, official protest and warning of Our Square. Of course I did it at the worst possible moment. It was early one morning when Mayme, on her bench, was looking a little hollow-eyed and disillusioned. I essayed the light and jocular approach to the subject: "Well, Mayme, how is the ardent swain?"

She turned to me with the old flash in her big, shadowed eyes: "Did you say swain or swine, Dominie?"

"Ah!" said I. "Has he changed his role?"

"He—he wanted me to take a trip to Boston with him."

"Have you told the Little Red Doctor?"

"Doc'd kill him," said Mayme simply.

"What better reason for telling?"

"Oh, the poor kid; he don't know any better."

"Doesn't he? In any case, I trust that you know better, after this, than to have anything more to do with him."

"Yep. I've cut him out," replied Doc were right. It's no good, his Doc were right. It's no good, his kind of game. Not for girls like me."

"My dear," I murmured, "I hope it isn't going to be too hard."

"He's so pretty," said Mayme McCartney wistfully.

So he was, now that I came to think of it. With his clear, dark color, his wavy hair, his languishing brown eyes, his almost girlishly graceful figure, and his beautiful clothes, he was pretty enough to fascinate any inexperienced imagination. But I cannot say that he looked pretty when, a few days later, he invaded our square in search of a Mayme who had vanished beyond his ken (she had kept her tenement domicile a secret from him), and, addressing me as "you white-whiskered old goat," accused me of having come between him and the girl upon whom he had deigned to bestow his favor. Unfortunately, for him, the Little Red Doctor chanced along just then and inquired, none too deferentially, what the scion of wealth and position was doing in that quarter.

"What business is it of yours, Redhead?" countered the offended visitor.

He then listened with distaste, but perforce (for what else could he do in the grasp of a man of twice his power?), to a brilliant and convincing summary of his character, terminating in a withering sketch of his personal and sartorial appearance.

"SHE DESCENDED UPON US FROM THE SOMBE R SUMPTUOUSNESS OF A GIGANTIC LIMOUSINE."

"I didn't mean the kid any harm," back to apologize."

"I—I came argued the scoin suavely.

"If I catch you snooping around here again, I'll break every bone in your body," the Little Red Doctor answered him.

"I guess this square's free to everybody. I guess you don't own it," said the youth, retreating to his car.

Notwithstanding the unimpeachable exactitude of this surmise, he was seen no more in that locality. Judge, then, of our dismay later, from a fellow employee of Mayme's, that she had been met at closing time by a swell young guy in a cherry rattler, who took her away to dine with him. Catechized upon the point later on by a self-appointed committee of two, consisting of the Little Red Doctor and myself, Mayme said vaguely that it was all right. We didn't understand. This is, I believe, the usual formula. The last half of it, at least, was true.

About that time we, in common with the rest of the nation, took that upon our minds which was even more important than Mayme McCartney's love affair. War loomed imminently before us. It was only a question of the fitting time to strike, and our square was feverishly reckoning up its military capacity. The great day of the declaration came. The nation had drawn the sword. In the week following our square was invaded.

She descended upon us from the somber sumptuousness of a gigantic limousine, the majestic, the imposing, the formidable, the authoritative Mrs. Berthelin. We knew at once who she was because she led, by the ear, as it were, her hopeful progeny, young David. I do not mean that she had an actual auricular grip on him, but the effect upon his woebegone and browbeaten person was the same. We hastily rallied our forces to meet her; the Little Red Doctor, the Bonnie Lassie, and myself. Mrs. Berthelin opened her exordium in a tone of high philippic, not even awaiting the formalities of introduction. But when I insisted upon these, and she learned that the Bonnie Lassie was Mrs. Cyrus Staten, she cringed. Despite a desire to keep out of the society columns quite as genuine as that of Mrs. Berthelin's to get in, the Cyrus Statens frequently figure among the shining ones, a fact almost painfully appreciated by our visitor.

After that it was easy to get her into the Bonnie Lassie's house, where her eloquence could not draw a crowd. To get young David there was not quite so easy. He made one fort to bolt, and even evinced signs of bolting on the steps.

His punishment was awaiting him. No sooner were we all settled in the Bonnie Lassie's studio than the mother proceeded to regale us with a history and forecast of his career, beginning with his precocious infant lispings and terminating with his projected, though wholly indefinite marriage into the highest social circles. To do David justice, he squirmed.

"Have you got him a job as a general in the army yet, ma'am?" inquired the Little Red Doctor suavely.

It was quite lost upon Mrs. Berthelin. She informed us that a commission as captain in the Quartermaster's Department was arranged for. And what she wanted us to understand clearly was that no designing little gutternipe was to be allowed to compromise David's future. She concluded with an imaginative and most unflattering estimate of Mayme McCartney's character, manners and morals, in the midst of which I heard a gasp.

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IT came from Mayme, standing, wide-eyed and white, in the doorway. The front door had been left ajar, and, seeing the Berthelin's monogrammed car outside, she had come in. The oratress turned and stared.

"That's a lie," said Mayme McCartney steadily. "I'm as straight a girl as your own daughter. Ask him."

She pointed to the stricken David. Pointing may not be ladylike, but it can be extremely effective. David's head had dropped into his hands. "Oh, ma!" he groaned.

"Don't call me 'ma,'" snapped the goaded Mrs. Berthelin. "And this is the girl?" She looked Mayme up and down. Mayme looked her up and down.

"I could give you a lorny-yette and beat you at the frozen-stare trick," said the irrepressible Mayme.

The Little Red Doctor gurgled. I saw the Bonnie Lassie's eyelids quiver, but her face was cold and impassive as she turned to the visitor.

"Mrs. Berthelin," said she, "you have made some very damaging statements, before witnesses, about Miss McCartney's character. What proof have you?"

"Why, he wants to marry her!" almost yelled the mother. "She's trapped him."

"That's another lie," said Mayme. "He told me himself that he was going to marry you."

"Did he? Then he's wrong. I wouldn't marry him with a brass ring," asserted Mayme.

"You wouldn't mar—— You wouldn't what?" demanded the mother, outraged and infuriated.

"You heard me. He knows it too. I don't like the family—what I've seen of them," observed Mayme judicially. "Besides, he's yellow."

David's shamed face emerged into view. "I'm not," he gulped. "She—she made me."

"Captain!" said Mayme with a searing scorn in her voice. "Quartermaster's Department! Safety first! When half the little fifteen-per tape snippers in the Emporium are breakin' their fourteen-inch necks volunteerin' early and often to get where the fightin' is."

David Berthelin stood on his feet, and his pretty face had an ugly expression. "Let me out of here," he growled.

"David!" said his mother. "Where are you going?"

"To enlist."

"Davy!" It was a shriek. "You shan't. I won't let you."

"You can go to——"

"Buddy!" Mayme's voice, magically softened, broke in. "Cut out the rough stuff. You better go home and think it over. Bein' a private is no pink-silk picnic."

Young David addressed Mayme in the words and tone of a misunderstood and aggrieved pet. "You think I'm no good. I'll show you, Mayme. Wait till I come back—if I ever do come back—and you'll be sorry."

"Hero stuff," commented the Little Red Doctor. "It'll all have oozed out of his finger tips this time tomorrow."

"Will you show me a place to enlist?" challenged the boy. "And," he added with a malicious grin, "will you enlist with me?"

"Sure!" said the Little Red Doctor. "I'll show you. But they won't take me." He bestowed a bitter glance on his twisted foot. "Come along."

They went off together, while Mrs. Berthlin scandalized Our Square by an exhibition of hysterics involving language not at all in accord with the rich respectability of her apparel and her limousine.

We waited at the Bonnie Lassie's for the Little Red Doctor's return. He came back alone. I thought that I detected a pathetic little gleam of disappointment in Mayme's eyes.

"He's done it," said the Little Red Doctor. "He's off tomorrow." And I was sorry for him, so much was there of tragic envy in his face.

"Will he write?" said Mayme in a curious, strained voice.

"He will. He'll report to me from time to time."

"Didn't he—wasn't there any message?"

"Just good-bye and good luck," answered the Little Red Doctor, censoring ruthlessly.

The Bonnie Lassie went over and put her arms around Mayme McCartney.

"My dear," she said softly, "it wouldn't do. It really wouldn't. He isn't worth it. You're going to forget him."

"All right." Suddenly Mayme looked like a very helpless and sorrowful little girl. "Only, it—is isn't goin' to be as easy as you think. He was so pretty."

Summer was smiting our square with white-hot bolts of sun fire, from which one could scarcely find refuge beneath the scraggly shelter of parched shrubbery, when one morning the Bonnie Lassie approached my bench with a fell and purposeful smile.

"Dominie, you're a dear old thing," she began in her most insinuating tones.

"I won't do it," I said hastily, foreboding something serious.

"Oh, but you've already done it."

"Help! Tell me the worst and get it over with."

"It must be lovely to be rich," said the Bonnie Lassie meditatively. "And so generous!"

"How much is it? What do you want it for? I haven't got that much," I hastily remarked.

"The Little Red Doctor has found the place. It's in New Mexico. And in the fall she's going on to the coast. He's almost willing to guarantee that a year of it will make her as strong as ever. And the hundred dollars a month you allow her besides her traveling expenses will be plenty. You are a good old thing, Dominie!"

"Where did the Little Red Doctor raise it?" I queried.

"There are times, Dominie, when your mind has real penetrative power. Think it over."

"The Weeping Scion of Wealth and Position!" I cried. "Did our medical friend blackmail him?"

"Not necessarily. He only dropped a hint that Mayme's chance here was rather poorer than a soldier's going to war, unless something could be done, and the Weeping Scion fairly begged to be allowed to do it. 'Do you think she'd take it from you,' said the Little Red Doctor, 'after what your mother called her?' 'Don't let her know. Tell her somebody else is doing it. Tell her it's from that white-whiskered ol—from the elderly gentleman——'"

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IT was much easier than I expected it to be, especially when litti Mayme, having come out to say goodbye, put her lips close to my ear and tried to whisper something, and cried and kissed me instead. Our Square was a dinner and duller place after she left. But her letters helped. They were so exactly like herself, even at the first, when things seemed to be going ill with her; they were all courage and quaint humor and determination to get well and come back to Our Square, which was the dearest and best place in the world, with the dearest and best people in it. Homesickness! Poor little, lonely Mayme. She was reading—she wrote the Bonnie Lassie—all the books that the Dominie had listed for her, and she was being tored by a school teacher with blue goggles and a weak heart who lived at the same resort. "Why grow up a boob?" wrote the philosophic Mayme, "when the lil old world is full of wise guys just aking to spill their wiseness?"

Contemporaneously, the Weeping Scion of Wealth was writing back his views of life and the emptiness thereof in letter orthography, but with distinctly less of spirit.

The Little Red Doctor was able to send him progressively encouraging news. When the cold weather came Mayme moved westward to southern California and found herself on the edge of one of the strange, tumultuous moving-picture colonies of that region. Thence came, presently, stirring tidings.

"What do you think?" wrote our exile. "They've got my funny little monkey mug in the movies. Five per and steady work. The director likes me and says he will give me a real chance one of these days. But, as the Dominie would say, this is a hell of a place. (Graceless imp!) I would not say it myself, because I am very careful of my speech and conduct. Perfect-lady stuff. You have to be out here. That reminds me, I have cut out the Mayme. Every fresh little frizzle in the colony with a false front and a pneumatic figure calls herself Mayme or Daisye or Tootsye. Not for me! I am keeping up my lessons and trying to make my head good for something besides carrying a switch. Tell the Little Red Doctor that it's so long since I coughed I have forgotten how. And I love you all so hard that it hurts. Your loving Mary McCartney.

"P. S.—I am going to be Marie Courtenay when I get my name up in the pictures. Put that in the directory and see how it looks.

"P. S. S.—How is my soldier boy getting along? Poor kid! I expect he is finding it a lot different from Broadway with money in your pocket."

About this time the Weeping Scion, in a muddy French sector, was finding things very different, indeed, from Broadway; but he had earned a corporal's stripes and then a sergeant's. You've got to be a man to do that.

Matters continued to go forward with Mayme—I beg her pardon, Mary McCartney—too.

"Better and more of it," she wrote the Bonnie Lassie. "They rang me in on one of their local Red Cross shows to do a monologue. Was I a hit? Say, I got more flowers than a hearse! You've got to remember, though, that they deliver flowers by the carload out here. And the local stock company has made me an offer. Ingenue parts. There is not the money that I might get in the pictures, but the chance is better. So Marie Courtenay moves on to the legit.—I mean the spoken drama. Look out for me on Broadway later!"

In the correspondence from Sergt. Berthelin there came a long hiatus followed by a curt bit of official information: "Seriously wounded." The Little Red Doctor brought the news to me, with a queer expression on his face.

"It doesn't look good, Dominie," he said. "I was getting to kind of like that young pup," he added moodily.

But in the end there came a scrawl from David himself. He was mending, but very slowly, and they said it would be a long time—months, perhaps—before he could get back to the front. Meantime they were still picking odds and ends, chiefly metallic, out of various parts of his system.

Thereafter the Little Red Doctor exhibited, but read to us only in small parts, quite bulky communications from overseas. Some of them, it became known, he was forwarding to our little Mary, out in the far west. Came her answer:

"Some of the 'Grass and Asphalt' sketches are wonders; some not so good. I am going to try out 'Doggy' if I can find a poodle with enough intelligence to support me. But you need not have been so mysterious. Doc, about your 'young amateur writer who seems to have some talent.' Did you think I would not know it was David? Why, bless your dear, silly heart, how could I know him as I did and not recognize his hand? Besides, I told him some of those stories myself. But how does he get a chance to write them? Is he back on this side? Or is he invalided? Or what? Tell me, I want to know about him. You do not have to worry about my—well, my infatuation for him any more. He was a pretty boy, though, wasn't he? But I have seen too many of that kind in the picture game. I'm spoiled for them. At that you were all wrong about Buddy. He was a lot decenter than you thought, only he was brought up wrong. Give him my love as one pal to another. I hope he don't come back a He-ro. I'm off'n he-roes too. Excuse again."

Wars and exiles alike come to an end in time. And in time our two wanderers returned, but Mary first, David having been sent into Germany with the army of occupation. Modest announcements in the theatrical columns informed an indifferent theatergoing world that Miss Marie Courtenay, an actress new to Broadway, was to play the ingenue part in the latest comedy by a highly popular dramatist. Immediately upon the production the theatergoing world ceased to be indifferent to the new actress; in fact, it went into one of its occasional furores about her. Not that she was in any way a great genius, but she had a certain indefinable and winningly individual quality. My prediction regarding the ancestral potencies of the monkey face were being abundantly justified.

No announcements, even of the most modest description, heralded the arrival of Sergt. Maj. (if you please!) David Berthelin upon his native shores. He came at once to Our Square and tackled the Little Red Doctor. "Where is she?" he asked.

The Little Red Doctor assumed an air of incredulous surprise. "Have you still got that bee in your bonnet?" said he.

"Where is she?"

Maneuvering for time and counsel, the Little Red Doctor took him to see the Bonnie Lassie, and they sent for me. We beheld a new and reconstituted David. He was no longer pretty. The soft, brown eyes were less soft and more alert, and there were little wrinkles at their corners. He had broadened a foot or so. That pinky delicate complexion by which he had in earlier and easier days set obvious store was brownish and looked hardened. His manner was unassertive, but eminently self-respecting, and me, whom aforetime he had stigmatized as a white-whiskered old goat, he now addressed as "sir."

"Perhaps you'll tell me where she is, sir," said he patiently.

"Leave it to me," said the Bonnie Lassie, who has an unquenchable thirst for the dramatic in real life. "And keep next Sunday night open."

* * * *

SHE arranged with Mary McCartney to give a reading on that evening, at her studio, of David's "Doggy" from the "Grass and Asphalt" sketches which he had written in hospital. It was a quaint, pathetic little conceit, the bewildered philosophy of a waif of the streets, as expressed to his waif of a dog. For the supporting part we borrowed Willy Wolly from the House of Silvery Voices, and admirably he played it, barking accurately and with true histrionic fervor in the right places. After the try-out Mary came over to my bench with a check for a rather dazzling sum in her hand, and said that now was the time to settle accounts, but she never could repay—and so forth and so on; all put so sweetly and genuinely that I fully wished I might accept the thanks if not the check. Instead of which I blurted out the truth.

"Oh, Dominie!" said the girl with such reproach that my heart sank within me. "Do you think that was fair? Don't you know that I never could have taken the money?"

"Precisely. And we had to find a way to make you take it. We couldn't have you dying on the premises," I argued with a feeble attempt at jocularity.

"But from him!" she said. "After what he had happened! And his mother! How could you let me do it?"

"I thought you would have gotten over that feeling by this time," I ventured.

"Oh, there's none of the old feeling left," she answered so simply that I knew she believed her own statement. "But to have lived on his money! Where is he?" she asked abruptly.

I told her that also and about Sunday night; the whole thing. The Bonnie Lassie would have slain me. But I couldn't help it. I was feeling rather abject.

Sunday night came, and with it Miss Marie Courtenay, escorted by an "ace" covered with decorations, whose name is a household word and who was only too obviously her adoring slave. Already there had been hints of their engagement. Had I been that ace, I should have felt no small discomposure at the sight of the girl's face when she first saw the changed and matured Weeping Scion of three years before. Young David, after greeting the star of the evening, took a modest rear seat as befitted his rank. But when the Bonnie Lassie announced "Doggy," it was his face that was the study.

Of that performance I shall say nothing. It is now famous and familiar to thousands of theatergoers But if ever mortal man spent twenty minutes in fairyland it was David while Mary was playing the work of his fancy. At the close he disappeared. I suppose he did not dare trust himself to join in the congratulations with which she was overwhelmed. I found him, as I rather expected, on the bench where he had sat when Mayme McCartney first found him. And when the crowd had departed from the studio I told the girl. Without even stopping to put on her hat she went out to him.

He was sitting with his elbows on his knees and his fists supporting his cheek bones. But this time he was not weeping. He was thinking. Just as of old, she put a hand on his humped shoulder. Startled, he looked up and jumped to his feet. She was holding something out to him.

"What's that?" he said.

"A check. For what I owe you."

"Who told you? The Little Red Doctor promised——"

"He's kept his promise. The Dominie told me."

"Oh, I suppose," he said slowly, "I've got to take this. You wouldn't—no, of course you wouldn't." He sighed.

"I've tried to keep strict account," she said.

David adopted a matter-of-fact tone. "I can't deny that it'll come in handy just now," he remarked. "At the present price of clothing, and with my personal exchequer in its depleted state——"

"Why," she broke in, "has anything happened? Your mother——?"

"Cut off," said David briefly.

"She's cut you off? On my account? Oh——"

"No. I've cut her off. Temporarily. She doesn't want me to work. I'm working. On a newspaper."

"That's good," said the girl warmly. "Let's sit down."

They sat down. Each, however, found it curiously hard to begin again. Finally David did make a beginning. "Mayme."

"No: not Mayme any more."

He flushed to his temples. "I beg your pardon, Miss Courtenay."

"Nonsense!" she said softly. "Mary. I've discarded the Mayme long ago."

"Mary," he repeated in a tone of musing content.

"You're a queer buddy," returned the girl, not quite steadily. "Did you bring me home a German helmet for a souvenir?"

"I didn't bring home much of anything, except some experience and the discovery of the fact that when I had to stand on my own feet I wasn't much."

"You got your stripes, didn't you?" suggested the girl.

"That's all I did get," he returned jealously. "I didn't get any medal or palms or decorations or crosses of war; I didn't get anything except an occasional calling down and a few scratches. If I'd had the luck to get into aviation or some of the fancy branches——" David checked himself. "There I go," he said in self-disgust. "Beefing again."

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IT was quite in the old, spoiled-child tone; an echo of indestructible personality, the Weeping Scion of other days; and it went straight to Mary's swelling, bewildered, groping heart. She began to laugh, and a sob tangled itself in the laughter, and she choked and said: "Buddy."

He turned toward her.

"Don't be dumb, buddy," she said in the words of their unforgotten first talk. "You've—you've got me—if you still want me."

She put out a tremulous hand to him, and it slipped over his shoulder and around his neck, and she was drawn close into his arms.

"The Little Red Doctor," remarked David after an interlude, in the shaken tone of one who has had undeserved miracles thrust upon him, "wrote me that to want something more than anything in the world and not get it was good for my soul, besides serving me right."

"The Little Red Doctor," retorted Mary McCartney with the reckless ingratitude of a woman in love, "is a dear little red idiot. What does he know about us?"

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Famous Art Collection Has a Beautiful Home

ELIZABETH RICHARDS DAVIDSON.

FLANKED by the Smithsonian Institution on the one side and the Department of Agriculture on the other, the new Freer Art Gallery, a simple one-story structure with an ample high basement and open central court, will be opened soon in Washington.

Within a few months this million-dollar Lorenzo-Florentine building will contain the most representative assemblage of art masterpieces in this country or any other. The museum is a gift and the most unique and restrictive bequest the nation has ever received from one of its citizens.

The donor of this extraordinary gift, Charles Lang Freer, began his life in the Catskills, sixty-five years ago, and there, over a year ago, those who loved him best laid him to rest. If he had lived a short time longer he would have seen the result which justified his outlay of time and money.

Mr. Freer's success in business and in art was simply the logical result of seeing and seizing. While living in one room and cooking his meals over an oil stove he climbed from the post of timekeeper to director of the Eel River railroad, a short line of only thirty miles of track, sixteen freight and six passenger cars and two locomotives. When the road was sold Mr. Freer and his friend, Frank Joseph Hecker, since Panama canal commissioner, pooled their frugal savings, a few thousand dollars, went to Detroit and started in a small way the Peninsular Car Company, the first car works in the west. In 1900 they sold out to a trust company for a vast sum. During the next twenty years Freer devoted himself to unwearied searching in all lands, but particularly in the far east and near east, for objects of art of the highest quality and widely separated periods of high civilization.

His efforts were abundantly rewarded. He always came back laden with wonderful specimens from old temples, palaces and tombs and treasure chests—marvellous glass out of Egypt, fictile productions from hitherto unknown sources, strange incised potteries from Babylon and Nineveh; potteries from Korea, their peculiar slip and inlay decorations, and Chinese porcelains and textiles in all reigns from 1766 B.C. to 1776 A.D.

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MR. FREER was the pioneer collector of Chinese and Japanese art. He reveled in their craftsmanship, whether of painting, print or pottery. To this vast assemblage of Asiatic art he added specimens from the works of eleven modern American artists, giving as his reason that he found in them the same feeling for the beautiful inherent in the works of ancient oriental art that he had assembled. Those who were in his confidence were well aware that he had dedicated himself to turning the major portion of his great wealth into objects of beauty and use for the enjoyment and education of the people of his own country.

The enormous size and scope of the Freer gatherings and Mr. Freer's rapidly flying years admonished him that he must make some prompt, definite and worthy disposition of his joy work. In January, 1904, he made his first and tentative approach to the regents of the Smithsonian Institution, outlining the extent of his collection and unfolding his object.

Not until January, 1905, was a committee sent from the institution to appraise his collection. They recognized the great value of his immense and unusual collection, and so reported. Some legal hitches required the intervention of President Roosevelt and Chief Justice Fuller. In 1906 Mr. Freer revised his former offer, satisfied every legal technicality and agreed to a fictitious sale which enabled the regents, without further question or delay, to accept the bequest. For the sum of $1, and "other valuable considerations paid to him in hand," Mr. Freer conveyed his collection to the nation "forever."

Those who have had the privilege of seeing Mr. Freer's wonderful examples of oriental and modern art masterpieces in his Detroit home and those he lent to museums, expositions and world fairs bear witness to the collection's unique value and rejoice that Mr. Freer's intelligent generosity prompted him to present his monumental collection to the nation in its entirety and forever.

While Mr. Freer bound himself to provide a suitable building to house his collection, he stipulated that the structure should be near the National Museum, that the interior should be arranged with special regard for the convenience of students and others desirous of an opportunity for uninterrupted study, that there were to be no additions to nor deductions from the collection and nothing else ever exhibited with it in the building, and that the collection should never be removed from the building except for repairs and renovations, that no charge should ever be made for admission or for the privilege of examining or studying the collections, that the museum should bear his name in some modest and appropriate form, that he should continue his censorship and that the collection should remain in his possession during his lifetime.

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IT is now only a matter of transportation when his dream will be in full realization and operation, definitely in the possession of the United States for the benefit of the untechnical observer, and making its appeal to the esthetic instincts of the American people.

To the more than 6,000 objects, arranged as they will be in such happy, systematic sequence and easy availability, Mr. Freer added his choice and comprehensive art library for the use of students. His custom, borrowed from the orientals, of exhibiting only a few of his treasures at a time, will be observed in the conduct of the gallery. Objects will be taken from their tills to special rooms for study.

Mr. Freer's contention of the close relationship existing between the ancient oriental and modern art masterpieces can now be verified. He demonstrated his discovery by selections from the works of Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, J. Gari Melchers, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Joseph Linden Smith, Childe Hassam, Abbot Handerson Thayer, Dwight William Tryon, John Henry Twatchman and James McNeill Whistler. Seven galleries are required to exhibit these examples.

With all obeisance to ten of these artists, the thrill of the gallery is the Whistler collection. Mr. Freer was the first American collector to begin to gather the works of this famous artist.

His 1,200 Whistler specimens require three large galleries, besides special and separate space for the world-wide famous peacock room.

When this famous peacock room was thrown on the market Mr. Freer was the ready and quick purchaser. The entire contents, inside woodwork and decorations were transported to his home in Detroit and reconstructed precisely as they stood in the Leland House in London, and the entire contents are again reconstructed in the gallery exactly as they stood in the annex Mr. Freer built especially for them in Detroit.

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THE history of this room really begins with the rose and silver picture—"La Princess du Pays de la Porcelaine." It was Rosetti who suggested to Whistler that Christine Spartali, afterward Countess de Cohen, and sister of his model, Mrs. Stillman, better known as Marie Spartali, would be the exact model for his proposed princess. It was also Rosetti who negotiated the sale of the picture to a collector, from whom it was purchased by Frederick R. Leland for 420 guineas. A year after Whistler's death Mr. Freer paid 5,000 guineas for the lovely princess. Dress